

# Late Neolithic Site in the Extreme Northwest of the New Territories, Hong Kong

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T.N. CHIU\* AND M.K. WOO\*\*

## THE SITE

STONE implements and pottery indicative of Late Neolithic settlement are known to have been found in several spots on the west coast of the New Territories facing Deep Bay (Davis 1965). All the artifact finds have been confined to the surface or near surface. No excavation has been undertaken. The site described here is the northernmost of a group of sites (see Fig. 1). Its location has not been reported and studied before. It differs from other sites along the west coast of the New Territories in that finds are not restricted to the surface. However, no proper excavation has been done. The artifacts were turned out by haphazard and rapid excavation by laborers digging clay for a nearby brick works (Fig. 2). Clay was consumed in the brick works at such a rapid rate that within two months of the discovery of the digging by M.K. Woo, of the Hong Kong University Archaeology Team, and before an organized visit by the whole team could be arranged, the entire site had been removed. During the course of rapid removal, however, members of the team had managed to make several site observations, measurements, and collections. Besides gathering in a large amount of artifacts of the type commonly found in Hong Kong, they also observed a layer of more frequent finds, especially of pottery and chipped stones, lying 0.6 to 0.9 m below the surface. At such depth, artifacts were beyond the reach of ploughing by the present means of cultivation, although the broken nature of the pottery indicated that the pieces had been disturbed before. This observation could encourage further investigators to excavate nearby sites where only surface finds have been noticed so far.

The site was found about 1,000 yds. northeast of the Sha Kong (Lau Fau Shan 流浮山) Police Station [measured along the Deep Bay Road]. Although the artifacts suggest a settlement similar to sites reported by Rev. D.J. Finn (1958) and Davis and Tregear (1960), the detail relief of this site is distinctive in that it is not on raised beaches. It occupies the lower

\* Lecturer, Department of Geography and Geology, University of Hong Kong.

\*\* Demonstrator, Department of Geography and Geology, University of Hong Kong.

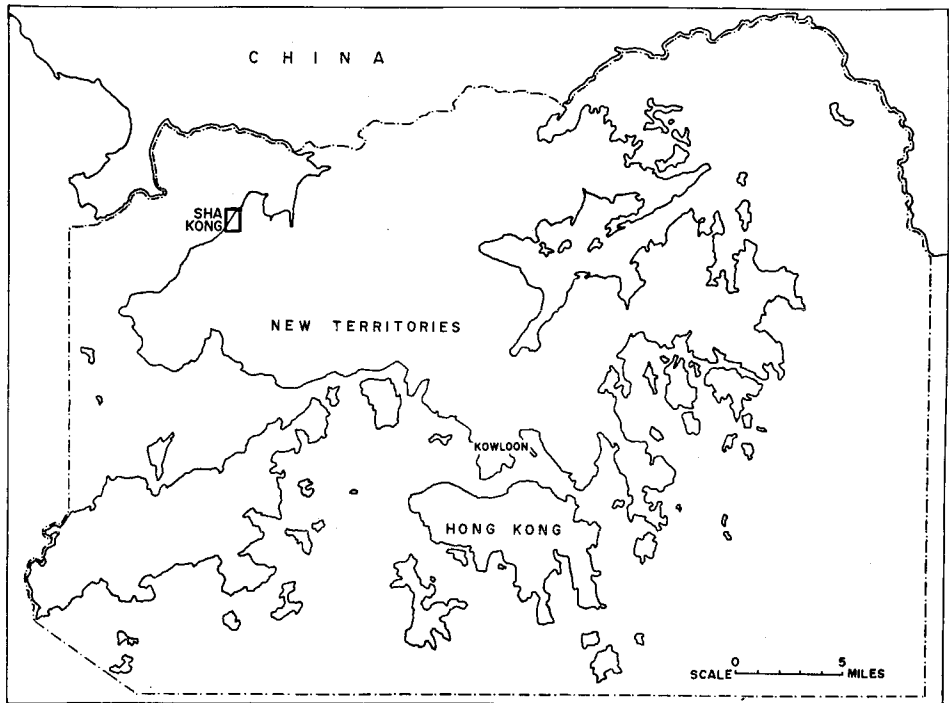


Fig. 1 Location map showing Sha Kong in the New Territories, Hong Kong.

slope of a round-topped hill that rises to just over 30 m. Like most other sites, it once bordered on the seashore, but it is now raised 27 ft. above sea level. It sits on the top side of a cliff probably cut by waves during a pause in the uplift. Further uplift raised the cliff high above the present sea level.

The bedrock of the site is schistose and is highly kaolinized. On top of this is a thick layer of mottled detrital material that is rich in clay. A shallow basin was formed on this mottled layer into which slope wash was deposited. At least five different bands of angular quartz sand were embedded in clay. There is a change of color from the red of the slope wash deposits to the brown of the culture layer that is rich in chipped stones (quartz), polished stones, and potsherds. Recent ploughing has produced a hard pan near the surface. The site is part of a hill slope that has been farmed for many years. Wide terraces have been cut out of the gentle slope. The brick works was set up on the shore in about 1950 to process the rich deposits of clay in the slope wash. The working for clay extended first southeast and, more recently, southwest, in which direction the present site was revealed (Plate I).

### THE FINDS

The layout of the artifacts could not be properly recorded, since excavation was not under the control of the archaeology team. The finds seemed to be scattered over the site with no definite arrangement, except for the greater concentration at depth. All potsherds were found in broken pieces, but a sufficient number of them have been recovered to allow useful reconstructions that indicate the original shapes and sizes of the pots. Stone artifacts are little damaged, and they give clear clues to the original forms.



Plate I Section exposed by digging for clay. White tape marks the layer of more frequent finds.

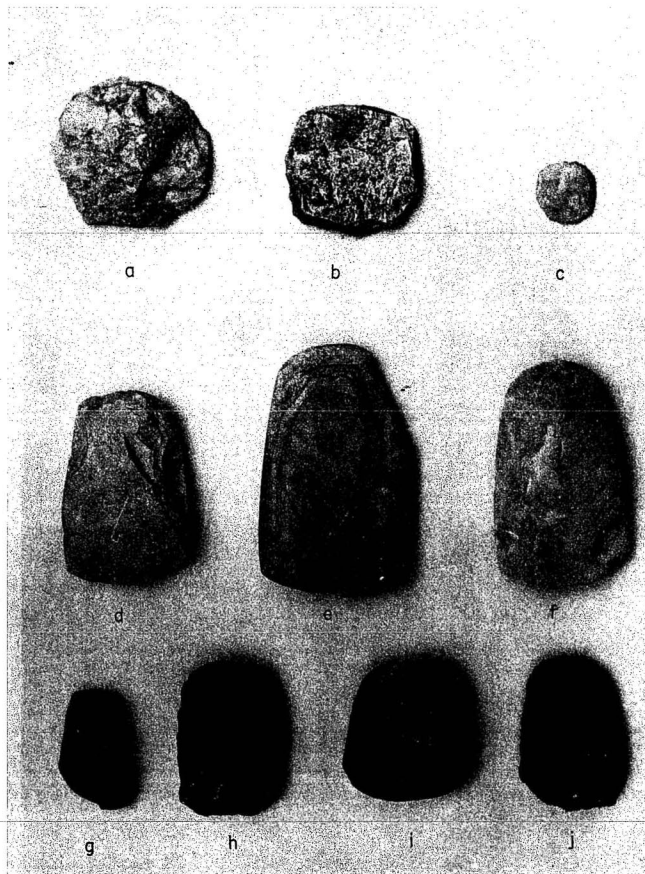


Plate IIa Stone artifacts: a-c, quartz disc; d-j, stone adzes (see Fig. 3).

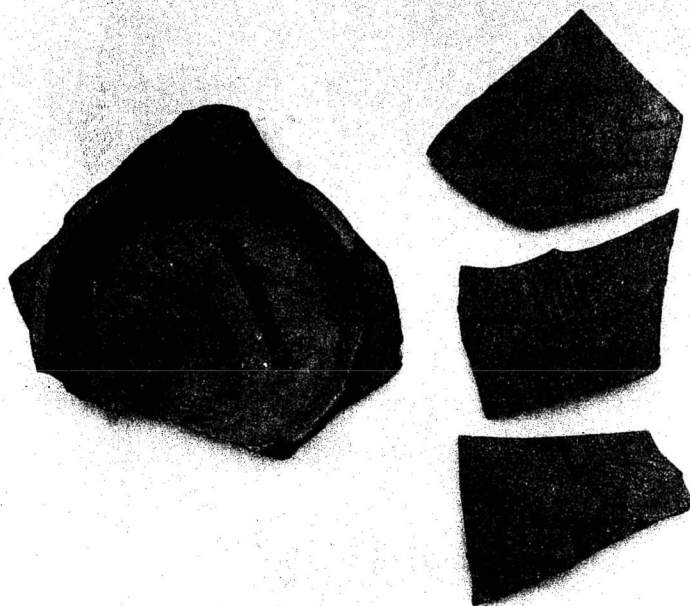


Plate IIb Potsherds to show the double-F and the net patterns and potter's mark (see Fig. 4).

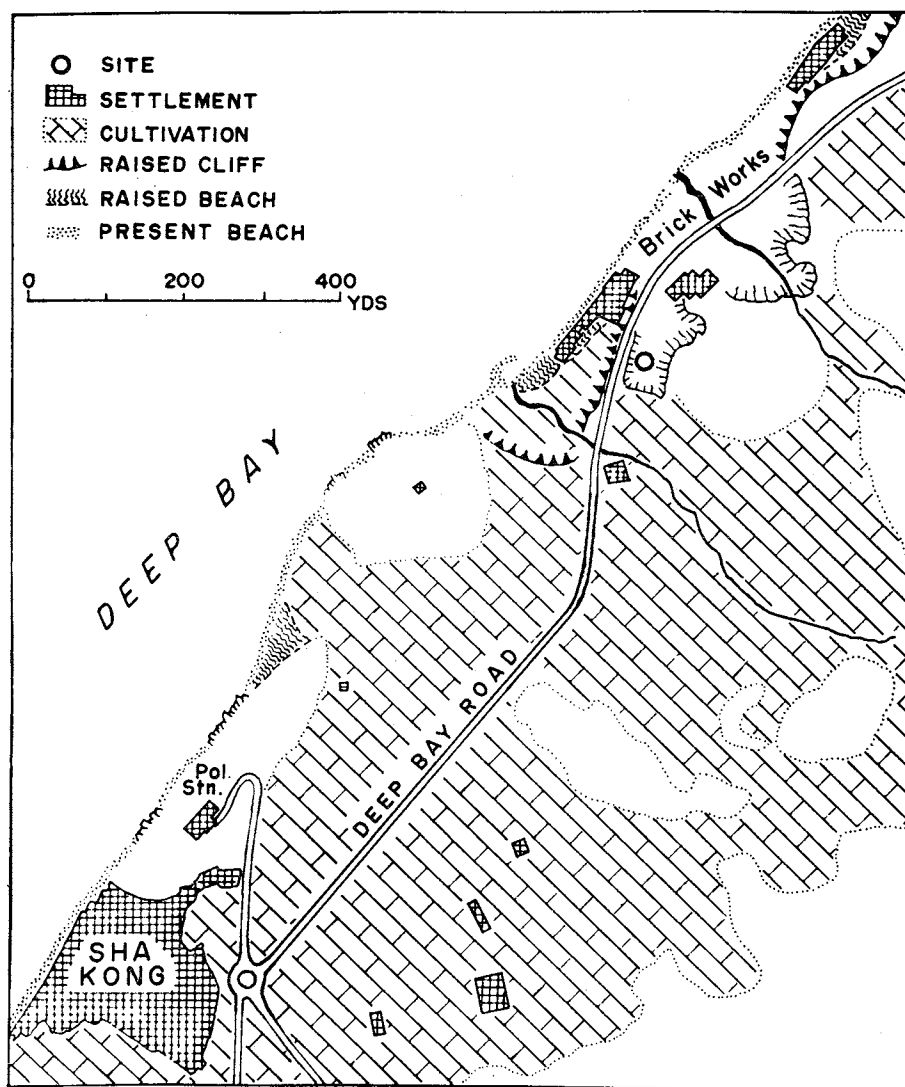


Fig. 2 Map showing surface features around the site.

### *Stone Artifacts*

These are similar to those often found in this part of China, namely, chipped discs, polishing stones, hammer stones, and unshouldered lentoid adzes (see Plate IIa and Fig. 3). Chipped discs are of quartz, and their use is not clear. No polishing has been applied to any of the discs or to their fragments. The polishing stones are of quartzite and show smooth, shallow, but wide depressions. The curvature of these depressions fits so closely in the convex surface of the lentoid adzes that it suggests the possible use of these two in shaping each other. The more resistant and gritty quartzite was a well-chosen material for shaping the adzes that are mainly of shale. Both quartz and quartzite occur in the local area, but shale does not. It was probably imported.

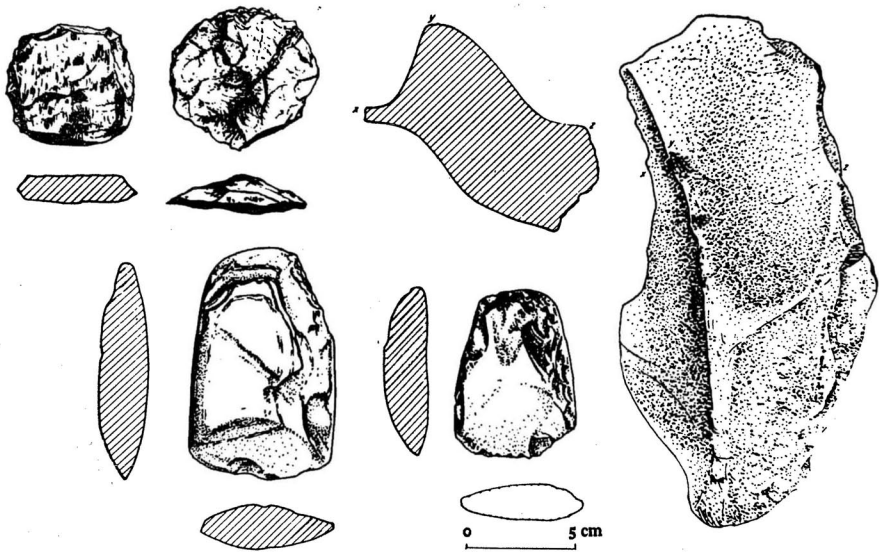


Fig. 3 Stone artifacts showing sections: quartz disc, adzes, and polishing stone.

### Pottery

Both hard and soft pottery were found in quantities, but the soft pottery shows little pattern or shape, partly because of its long burial in well-watered clay and partly because of the very rough handling by the diggers, who had regard only for the clay. On the hard pottery, only three impressed patterns are found: the net pattern, the many-grooved rings with stich-prick, and the double-F (Fig. 4). Combinations of the net pattern and the double-F are common (Fig. 5). One of the bases of broken pots bears a special imprint made by parallel scratches (Plate II*b*). Its pattern resembles the potter's marks described by Father Finn (1958). The absence of other patterns that appear in most other neolithic sites of Hong Kong might be explained by the fact that not all the artifacts turned out in this site were recoverable.

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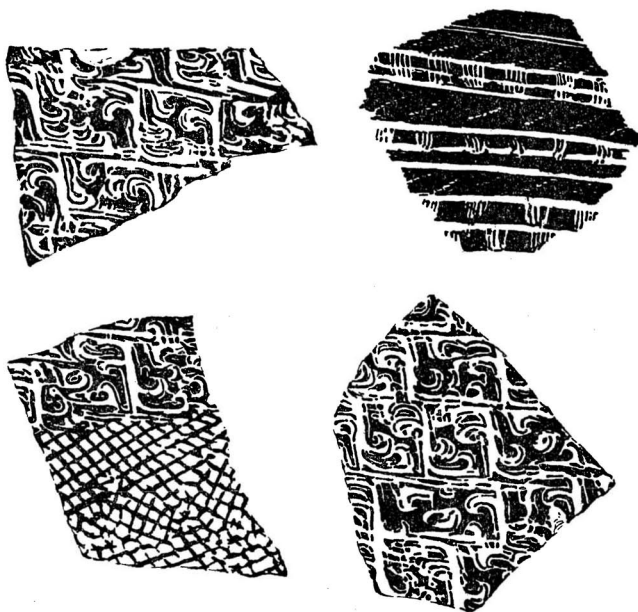


Fig. 4 Rubbings of the three impressed patterns on hard pottery.

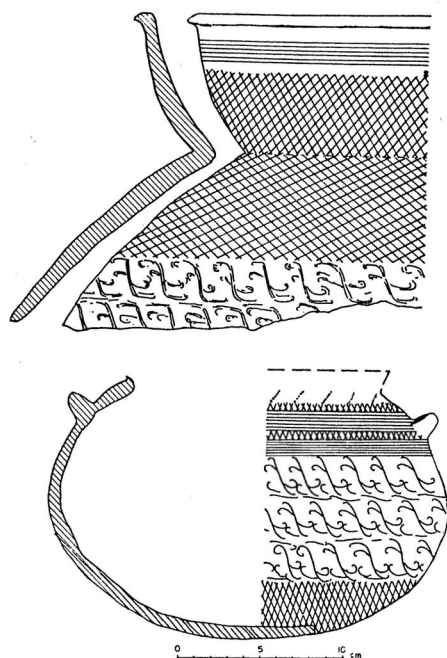


Fig. 5 Reconstructions of pots showing combinations of patterns: double-F, many-grooved rings, stich-prick, and net.

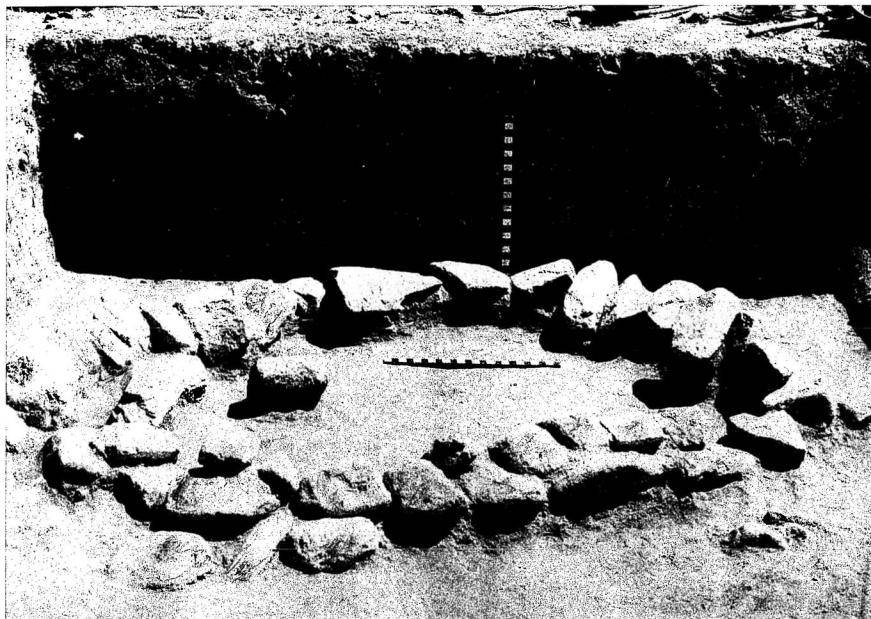


Plate Ia Circle of stones of a complete burial at Timurgarha.

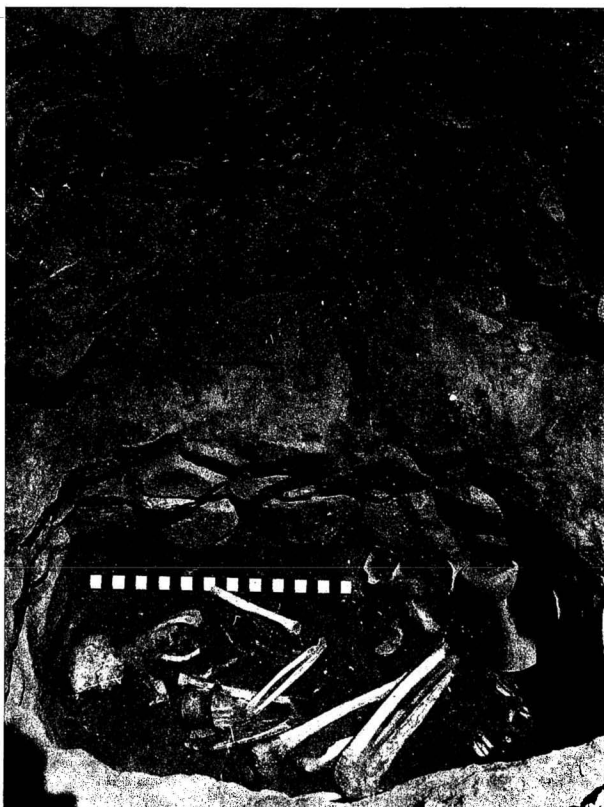


Plate Ib Grave pit of a complete burial at Timurgarha.



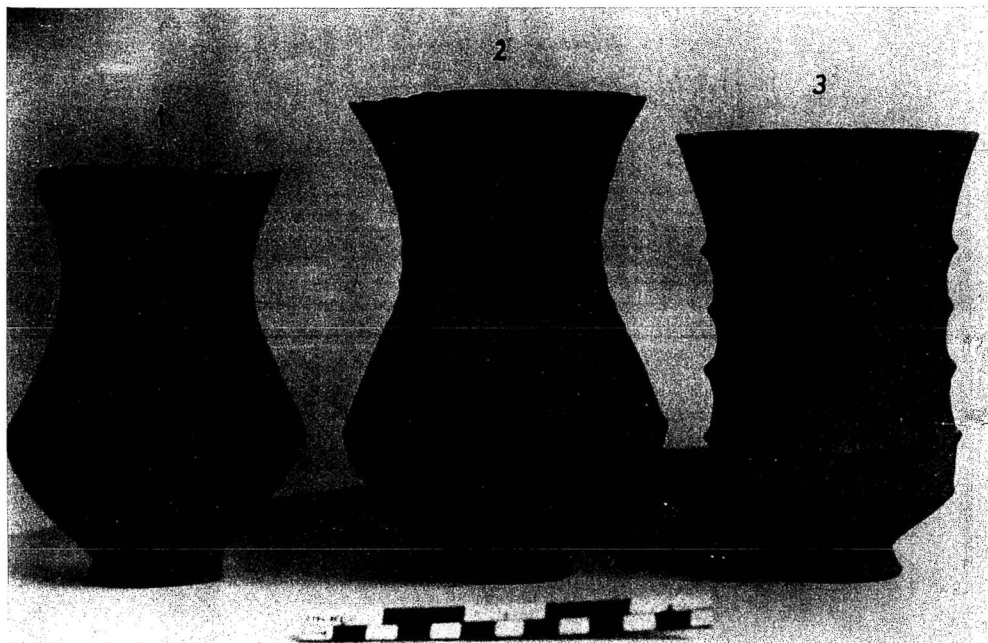


Plate IIa Carinated tall drinking vases, Period I, Timurgarha.

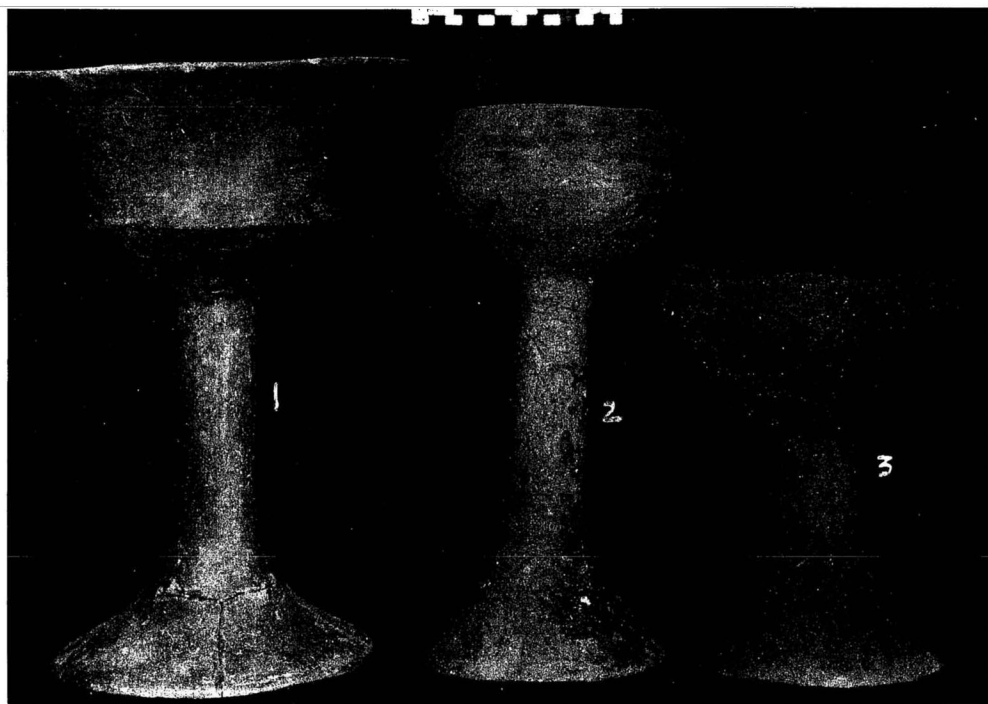


Plate IIb Offering stands from Timurgarha:

- (1) Grave 2 of 1964, Period I;
- (2) Grave 2B of 1964, Period I;
- (3) Grave 101 of 1965, Period II.